

The Urban Link

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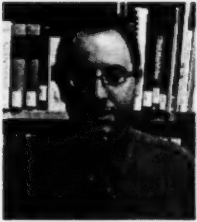


Newsletter of the Institute of Urban Studies

<http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca>

Director's Note

Dr. Jino Distasio, Director



In 1969, the Institute of Urban Studies was "born" out of a need to have a research unit within the University of Winnipeg that focused on pressing issues. In the institute's first newsletter (1971), then-Director Lloyd Axworthy wrote, "The Institute is reaching out from its central city location to become involved with the urban issue.

It is designed to probe the city and test the means of treatment for the pressing ailments of our urban society."

Throughout the 1970s, the Institute worked hard on promoting issues that had relevance in the community. In August of 1971, the Institute and local community members established the "People's Housing Rehabilitation and Repair" project which saw some 25 staff hired to undertake what was being called "limited repair work" within the community. The goal was to focus on small but important repairs to many homes as opposed to expending a tremendous amount of effort on a single large project. This effort resulted in training and skills building for many new "migrants or unemployed persons."

Under the leadership of Alan Artibise, the Institute during the 1980s continued to build a solid base of research, examining Aboriginal issues, housing for persons with disabilities, energy conservation and the role of municipal government. The 1980s also saw the Institute move more into publishing by assuming the editorial and publishing rights to two key journals; the Urban History Review and Plan Canada.

In the 1990s, the Institute marked its own milestone; reaching 25 years "in business" it also launched its own publication, The Canadian Journal of Urban Research (CJUR). CJUR (which is now in its sixteenth year of publication) remains one of the only interdisciplinary peer-reviewed Canadian journals devoted to urban issues.

Today, the Institute remains one of Canada's oldest urban research centres and its role and mandate hold true to the early days. With continued effort on the inner city and the social and economic conditions of persons residing nearby, the Institute remains a relevant contributor to not only the local scene but also has a national pres-

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ence. Building on the strong partnerships cultivated by past director Tom Carter, the Institute has grown to contribute meaningfully to the national debate on the condition of cities.

So as the University of Winnipeg celebrates its 40th Anniversary, the Institute is grateful for the opportunity to share in this great day but we are also cognizant that over the last 40 years many of the issues and challenges faced in neighbourhoods just outside of our doors continue to need our support and partnership on finding solutions. In as much as we have contributed to positive change, we remain aware that many of the problems and concerns raised in the 1960s remain unchanged.

Articles

The Myths About "The Myths About Sprawl"

By Michael Dudley

With the growing popularity and acceptance of Smart Growth principles comes the backlash: every once in a while, a representative from a libertarian think tank who feels that the notion of "sprawl" is simply pejorative and socialist nonsense, decides to show that it's all a big fuss over nothing. For example, in January 2007 longtime Smart Growth foes Samuel Staley and Ted Balaker of the Reason Public Policy Institute challenged what they call the "anti-suburbs culture" by attempting to dismantle some of the "myths" of urban sprawl in the pages of the Washington Post.

Yet, as I show below, their resolutely "market-friendly" perspective leads them to prop up enough "straw men" arguments to build a neighborhood of energy-efficient straw bale houses:

1. Americans are addicted to driving

No they're not—according to Balaker and Staley, they're just wealthy, and wealth is the key "driver" of car use. But arguing that people drive because they're wealthy is hardly to argue that they aren't addicted. Far from it: it merely shows that they are better able to satisfy their need to drive. It's kind of like arguing that cocaine users snort coke only because they can afford to.

2. Public transit can reduce traffic congestion

No, it won't they argue, because it will still only meet a small percentage of travel needs. But stating that transit can only meet a small percentage of given population's transportation needs is not to argue that it won't reduce congestion. It certainly will—after all, it is replacing at least some cars on the roads. It just won't eliminate it, which nobody claims anyways.

3. We can cut air pollution only if we stop driving

Who argues that only reducing car use will cut air pollution? That would ignore all the stationary air pollution sources, industry, homes etc. But never mind: Why would we want to stop driving? According to Staley and Balaker, cars are cleaner than they used to be, and as the fleet is replaced over time we can drive more than ever. They are partly correct here—it's true that technological advances since 1970 have drastically cut emissions from each car (particularly lead), but these advances have been more than offset by the sheer increase in the number of vehicles, especially light trucks and SUVs.

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4. We're paving over America

Staley and Balaker have more good news here: "How much of the United States is developed? Twenty-five percent? Fifty? Seventy-five? How about 5.4 percent?" Sure, only 5.4% of land is developed—but this is an extremely crude measure. Lots of the continental United States is mountain, desert and forest. What's at stake here is the amount of arable land under pavement. And according to the folks at Sprawlcity.org, that's disappearing pretty quickly—by 2050 the US will have lost 15% of remaining cropland, while the population will have grown 40%. And in any case agricultural land is highly vulnerable to other impacts, such as climate change .

Which brings us to —

5. We can't deal with global warming unless we stop driving

Again, this is quite a simplification of the argument against car culture. Even under the most "green" of scenarios, nobody expects that cars are going to disappear entirely and that nobody will be driving. Regardless, what's interesting about their argument is that they pose a very dubious reason to oppose Kyoto: it would hurt the poor. "It may well be that dealing with global warming by building resilience [in developing nations] against its possible effects is more productive—and more realistic—than trying to solve the problem by driving our automobiles less."

Again, a logical fallacy: they set up a false choice between reducing car use and helping poor nations be more resilient. Yet, a newly released report for the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) shows, preventing climate change to whatever degree possible is an anti-poverty strategy .

These weak and defensive "anti-Smart Growth" arguments are a sign that the system—the political economy of land use and its attendant myths and ideologies—is beginning to crack. The sheer disingenuousness and logical fallacies in these arguments shows that it is Staley and Balaker, not the advocates of Smart Growth, who are peddling in myths.



Work on Recent Projects

Communities in Distress

The intent of this report is to devise and test a multidimensional and theoretically sound community distress framework that may be used to examine urban conditions in Canada through the identification and operationalizing of select indicators, and by gathering and analyzing data sources relevant to the dimensions of those indicators. The report will propose a framework for analyzing community distress; key indicators for measuring community distress; and test the utility, accuracy and viability of this model through a pilot test, the results of which are reported in Section 4. This report for Service Canada is in partnership with the Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation and the Rural and Small Town Programme, Mount Allison University.

Mobility Options for the Aging Population of Manitoba: An Action Plan for Regional Solutions

This project consists of an extensive consultation regarding mobility for seniors with a range of stakeholders including representatives from civic, municipal and provincial governments, the transportation sector, the business community, health and social services, non-profit organizations and seniors' agencies. The report outlines 13 recommendations that encapsulate both short-term and long-term actions to improve the mobility of an increasingly elderly population. Overall, short-term recommendations focus on improving existing mobility resources that demonstrate their effectiveness in meeting the needs of seniors. Long-term recommendations relate more to issues of urban design and the need to develop communities that provide easy access to both services and social support networks.

Transportation Options for the Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre

Senior resource centres are located throughout the city of Winnipeg so that most seniors can access a centre in their neighbourhood. However, access to the Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre presents particular issues for Aboriginal seniors as they live throughout the city while this senior centre with cultural programming is centrally located. This small project looked specifically at the feasibility of purchasing and operating a van for the Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre. The report provides information regarding sources of funding for non-profit organizations to purchase a van, as well as issues related to the operation and maintenance of the vehicle.

West Broadway Housing Plan Survey

IUS has provided technical support in the development of the survey, data collection and entry, as well as data analysis.

MUNHA Housing Plan

Over the past year, IUS has worked with Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association, the Winnipeg housing groups and a community planning team to develop a long term housing strategy. During this process, IUS had the honour of participating in a mentoring program; Kelly Grover, an Aboriginal youth who worked with IUS on this project, is now the Administrative Assistant for MUNHA. Congratulations Kelly!

Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre –Workshops

In Winnipeg there are over 4000 Aboriginal seniors with many living in poverty and inadequate housing. The Aboriginal Seniors Resources Centre and IUS co-facilitated two workshops with Aboriginal seniors on the topics of housing and finance.



What's New at IUS

A New Blog for the Institute of Urban Studies

For the past two years the city states blog has been an opportunity to comment on urban issues, and while it has linked when possible to Institute publications, it hasn't been used to report on Institute activities. We've come to realize that there is so much else going on that we needed a new venue to report on them. That's why we're launching a new blog, called simply The Institute of Urban Studies. This new blog (at <https://blog.uwinnipeg.ca/ius2/>) will be used to report on Institute research, public consultations, publication releases, and media appearances. For example, IUS director Dr. Jino Distasio is frequently called upon to comment on local and national issues in the media, and so we will be using this new blog to better track and link to these articles, TV and radio appearances. We will also use the new blog to link to staff publications external to the Institute—op-ed pieces in newspapers or on Planetizen. CityStates (<http://blog.uwinnipeg.ca/ius/>) will still be our platform for editorial-style commentary.

The "Plan Your Winnipeg Contest" (March 20th 2007)

The "Plan Your Winnipeg" contest was a major event that garnered a great deal of public attention, capturing the imagination of young people. As the Winnipeg Free Press was the co-sponsor, it received positive notices in the paper¹. Entrants ranged from the elementary grades to University students. It generated an enormous response, filling a campus gymnasium with 'science fair' style displays highlighting everything from rapid transit facilities to striking urban designs for housing and public space.

Over 150 students submitted entries, and judges were drawn from the local urban planning community. On March 20th the winners were presented with their prizes by University President Loyd Axworthy. The winners were:

- Young Adult: Brendan Salako. "WinnShare: Creating Social Change through Volunteerism"
- Elementary: Rylan Ramnarace: A large drop-in centre for the homeless;
- High School: Vincent Massey's Sustainable Development Committee: Wind Power proposal.

¹ Welch, Marcy Agnes. "Young eyes on the old town." Winnipeg Free Press, Sunday March 25th 2007. http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/life/life_picture/story/3922976p-4534100c.html

Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) Student Paper Award Winner 2007

Colin Wolfe is the recipient of the IUS 2007 Student Paper Award. His paper ***Reading and Analyzing Urban Landscape: Structural Design and Social Impacts in Winnipeg Central Park*** analyzes the relationship between structural design and social behaviour within an urban public space using Winnipeg Central Park as a case study. The findings suggest that the structural dimensions leading to geographical isolation, paired with a lack of upkeep of the area have a significant effect upon social behaviour.





Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation



Canada Research Chair Report

"Australian home buyers, particularly first time buyers, are being forced to take on more and more debt to buy a property."

The Australian Housing Market: No Haven for Those Seeking Affordable Housing

The Australian housing market is not a welcoming place for those searching for affordable housing. Prices of both single-family homes and units (condominiums) have been rising for many years. Although there has been some moderation and even slight declines in a few cities recently, prices remain high and are still climbing in several of the major centres as illustrated below.

Median Property Prices: Australian Major Cities: December 2006

	Units (condos)		Houses	
	Price \$	Annual Change %	Price \$	Annual Change %
Sydney	352,400	-2.9	526,160	0.5
Melbourne	281,220	2.3	366,415	3.1
Brisbane	266,400	4.1	350,400	5.1
Canberra	314,625	9.5	438,715	5.2
Hobart	211,370	19.5	243,870	6.6
Adelaide	215,650	7.5	331,410	8.0
Darwin	276,285	24.4	413,870	17.1
Perth	340,065	31.4	502,440	31.0

Source: Australian Property Monitors, December 2006

Australian home buyers, particularly first time buyers, are being forced to take on more and more debt to buy a property and more households are unable to qualify for financing. In addition to declining affordability there are other negative spin-offs of rising prices. The number of mortgage defaults and property repossessions has been rising rapidly. Interest rates increased three times in 2006 and even the small increases in payments pushed many households into default. Property repossessions in the State of Victoria, containing the City of Melbourne, jumped from 1,225 in 2003 to 2,791 in 2006—a 128 percent increase. Similar increases are characteristic throughout most of Australia. With the combination of high prices, increases in interest rates and what has been described as "reckless lending" practices, people have taken on more debt than they can afford.

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Australian market analysts also talk about the "two speed housing market" where the rich get rich and the poor get poorer. Properties in gentrifying and amenity rich neighbourhoods (usually the inner city) continue to increase in price. Those who own these properties or can afford to buy them (the rich) experience significant equity gains. At the lower end of the market place, usually in the poorest, most disadvantaged suburbs of cities like Sydney prices have been declining. People who are defaulting on mortgages in these areas cannot sell their properties for the mortgage amount. Houses, that sold for \$250,000-300,000 a year ago, are now selling for \$50,000-60,000 less. In Sydney the New South Wales State Government is also selling ex-housing commission (public housing) houses in these suburbs at low prices to clear them off their books. Do these circumstances mean more affordable housing for modest income people? Not really. Many of these properties are being bought up by "property vultures" who purchase at these lower values, invest up to \$40,000 in renovations then flip them for a profit to people still desperate to get on the "property ladder." It seems this "two speed market" helps only the rich.

High house prices, declining affordability, forced sales and defaults mean that more people are staying in, or moving back into, the rental market. This means tighter rental markets and increasing rental rates. Rental vacancy rates around Australia have dropped from a long-term average of 2.9 percent to 1.8 percent. The vacancy rate in Melbourne is 1.6 percent, the lowest since 1998. Median rents in Melbourne and Sydney jumped 6.4 and 6.9 percent respectively in 2006, the inflation rate climbed about 3.4 percent. It is not only the low-income people who are suffering in the rental market—even modest income renters with good full time jobs are having difficulty finding affordable rental accommodation. There is considerable evidence to indicate that "silent auctions" for rental units are occurring as people offer ten, fifteen or fifty dollars more than the listed weekly rent just to secure a unit. Median rents for a two-bedroom unit range from \$245 a week in the distant suburbs to over \$300 a week in the inner city in Melbourne. Higher rents are pushing inner city living out of reach for low and modest income renters, often forcing them to distant suburbia far from their employment and the services they need.

As house prices continue to rise in Canadian cities we might want to look carefully at the Australian experience to ensure we do not create many of the same problems in Canada.

Tom Carter

Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation



City of Winnipeg and Kampala City

Partnership Update Report

By John Osborne

For five weeks in July/August of 2006, Dr. Tom Carter and University of Winnipeg student researcher John Osborne were in Kampala, Uganda to perform a community needs assessment concerning the location and development of HIV/AIDS treatment facilities. This project was a continuation of the city partnership between the City of Winnipeg and Kampala City, with support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and financing from the Canadian International Development Agency. This municipal partnership began under Mayor Glen Murray in 2003, and its mandate had evolved into two focal points: to improve the working relationship between local government agencies and people in the parishes and villages; and, to enhance the capacity of people living in these neighbourhoods to participate in community planning, conducting needs assessment, and priority setting. The HIV/AIDS needs assessment was the vehicle chosen to advance this agenda.

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The decision was made to focus the needs assessment on a particular community in Kampala that exhibited both extreme need and unique geographical characteristics. Mbuya I Parish (a parish is a political/administrative unit in Uganda) had a 2002 census population of just under 20,000 people within Kampala's 1.2 million inhabitants. Mbuya I is composed of 6 villages, which is the lowest level administrative unit.

The Parish is an area of high poverty and low formal employment—there is only a 31% employment rate in its poorest village according to a recent UN Habitat study. The informal economy is, therefore, used by residents to supplement their incomes. Comprehensive health care is not readily accessible for many residents, and many children cannot attend school due to insufficient supply of public schools and the prohibitive cost of private schools. Furthermore, infrastructure is lacking in Mbuya I: inadequate sanitation, transportation, and water provision systems co-exist with substandard housing conditions to create a city-slum environment.

Figure 1: Drainage/Waste Disposal Ditch Next to Slum Housing



Two unique and significant geographical/land use factors also affect Mbuya I. First, there is a military barracks within the parish. Secondly, a major truck stop is located on the edge of the parish. Both of these land uses bring a large number of men into this area of high poverty, which fuels local prostitution activity—which, in turn, facilitates the spread of HIV/AIDS.

There were four major parts to the needs assessment methodology. A literature review was conducted before and after the trip to Kampala. Once in Uganda, secondary data was collected from federal/local government bodies and contacts at Kampala's Makerere University. An HIV/AIDS service inventory was gathered through field work interviews with local Community-Based Organizations, Non-Government Organizations, and Faith-Based Organizations. This work was aided by employing two students from Makerere University to join the Winnipeg/Kampala team. An extensive community consultation was the fourth part of the work completed. This included: consultation meetings with political/community leaders; key informant, military, & police interviews; and focus group discussions.

**Figure 2: Service Inventory Interview****Figure 3: Orphans Focus Group**

The six separate focus groups included: youth, women, men, orphans, commercial sex trade workers, and the elderly. All six villages in Mbuya I were represented at each focus group. Participants were asked to identify:

- 1) HIV/AIDS service providers—over 20 were identified by respondents
- 2) The services that service providers offer—ranged from counseling and sensitization to income generation to health care and Anti-Retroviral drug provision
- 3) Community strengths—community mobilization, volunteerism, and networking
- 4) Community weaknesses and gaps—poverty, lack of volunteer support/incentives and barracks/truck stop influences
- 5) Top priorities—education, orphan and vulnerable children services; a community health centre; housing for the needy; and income generation through economic development

Based on the findings, a funding solicitation document was produced that incorporated a holistic view of HIV/AIDS issues in Mbuya I. A final report to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is currently being prepared.

John Osborne is Senior Research Assistant to the Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation. He is a Geography student (Fourth Year Honours) at the University of Winnipeg.



IUS Library

Library News

New in the IUS Library
Michael Dudley

Focus on the Centre for Sustainable Transportation



The
Centre for
Sustainable
Transportation

Le
Centre pour
un transport
durable

Since its relocation to the Institute of Urban Studies, the Centre for Sustainable Transportation has dedicated a portion of its financial resources to supporting a dedicated collection of library materials housed in the IUS library. These materials will provide resources for the Centre's research, and also serve as a community resource for students, academics and community researchers interested in sustainable transportation.

To illustrate some of the themes and issues this collection addresses, let's take a look at three recent anthologies:

The Geography of Urban Transportation, Third Edition. Edited by Susan Hanson and Genevieve Giuliano. New York: The Guilford Press.
Location: IUSCT HE 305 G46 2004

Both an educational text and a professional resource, this book examines a wide range of transport-related issues, from finance to freight; from urban form to urban planning processes; from public transit to social and environmental justice issues. The editors provide no general introduction or conclusion to the book, but rather let each article stand on their own. The book includes an excellent historical look at the influence of transportation modes on urban land use in the United States, as well as an examination of the sundry environmental impacts transportation can have. The articles are thoroughly documented and supported with tables, graphs and B&W illustrations.

Social Change and Sustainable Transport. Edited by William R. Black and Peter Nijkamp. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
Location: IUSCT 242 S63 2002

This collection of selected papers from a 1999 conference called Social Change and Sustainable Transport (SCAST) examines the social dimension of the sustainable transport problem, framed within the contexts of globalization, emerging information technology and institutional considerations. It proposes an integrative framework focusing on behaviour change, policy and technology, one that incorporates interdisciplinary approaches from the social sciences, humanities and, yes, engineering. Given its emphasis on social issues, the volume examines the needs of particular groups, such as women, the elderly, as well as how certain types of travel—for recreation, leisure and work—affect travel infrastructure and the environment. The last section looks towards the future, and the potential to decrease automobile use through policy and technological innovations.

Barriers to Sustainable Transport: Institutions, Regulation and Sustainability. Edited by Piet Rietveld and Roger R. Stough. London: Spon Press.
Location: IUSCT HE 147.65 B 368 2005.

While the previous volume focused on social issues, this one is concerned more with institutional barriers. Its overarching framework is that there are three types of institutions—informal, formal and governance—all of which contribute to the creation and maintenance of barriers to sustainability. Together these institutions can impose significant hurdles to societal change: the example provided in the introduction is that large-scale transport projects costing more than \$1 billion can require 20 years of up-front work to remove institutional opposition. Informal barriers (values, norms, practices and customs) may be most significant because they are powerful motivators for behaviour. Formal institutions (laws and regulations) may be subject to change more quickly than informal ones, but remain stable over long periods of time—and also inform the aforementioned values and norms. The third type—governance—are minor regulations and policies that regulate administrative and policy bodies and their relationships with other governmental entities. International in scope, this volume tackles common myths and misconceptions as well as the always-contentious debate between private and public investments and interests.

IUS Library Hours

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.



CANADIAN JOURNAL OF URBAN RESEARCH

Revue canadienne de recherche urbaine

Volume 15, Issue 2, Winter 2006

Principal Editor: Marc Vachon

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CANADIAN JOURNAL OF URBAN RESEARCH

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**Canadian Planning and Policy
Aménagement et politique au Canada**

Joint Issue Editor: Ian Skelton

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Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance (WIRA)



By Anita Friesen,
Community
Liaison Director



Updates on
Community-based
Research

The following research reports are now available on the WIRA website:

- *Understanding Housing and Neighbourhood Dynamics: An Analysis of Housing Strategies in the Daniel McIntyre and St. Matthews Neighbourhoods, Winnipeg* by Ian Skelton, Noah Yauk, James Platt, Erin McCleery and Amy Jordan
- *Second-Stage Housing for Aboriginal Ex-offenders in Winnipeg's Inner City* by Jason Brown, Nancy Higgitt and Susan Wingert, Dilly Knol and Heather Block, Murray Barkman and Catherine Charette

WIRA featured in Special Issue of the Canadian Journal of Urban Research

"Winnipeg Inner City Research Alliance: Working to Build a Stronger Inner City in Winnipeg" (Volume 15, Issue 1, Summer 2006) features articles about research projects undertaken by academic and community partnerships seeking to better understand issues in Winnipeg's inner city.

Articles

- *Working to Build a Stronger Inner City in Winnipeg*
- *Housing for Assisted Living in Inner City Winnipeg: A Social Analysis of Housing Options for People with Disabilities*
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For more information see: http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/cjur_browse_archive.html

Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Social Enterprises, Knowledgeable Economies and Sustainable Communities

WIRA is a partner in "Linking, Learning, Leveraging" (LLL), a five-year research initiative in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario which supports research partnerships of community groups and academics who combine their strengths, expertise and resources to work towards a greater understanding of the social economy.

February 18 – 20th brought together students, community and academic partners involved in the LLL initiative for a regional Symposium. Forty-five people attended the events and participatory sessions, discussing social economy research currently underway in the three provinces. By the end of the Symposium, research priorities and policy actions had been identified within the main clusters of research activity. This collaborative work provides focussed direction for the development of new projects at the local, provincial and regional level.

There are three community-based research projects currently underway through WIRA:

- *Community Research Hub: A Case Study in Social Economy*
Research Partners – Judith Harris, Inonge Aliaga, Joan Hay
- *Building a Policy Framework for CED and the Social Economy*
Research Partners – Brendan Reimer, John Loxley
- *Sustainable Financing for the Social Economy*
Research Partners – Wanda Wuttunee, Russ Rothney

For more details about these projects and the larger initiative see:
http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/WIRA/wira_social%20economy.htm

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